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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 002788

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MASS](#) [IN](#) [PK](#) [NSSP](#)

SUBJECT: INDIAN LEFT REMAINS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO US SOUTH ASIA INITIATIVE

REF: NEW DELHI 2348

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[11.](#) (C) Summary: Most Indian strategic commentators have endorsed the Administration's March 25 South Asia Initiative, and there is an emerging Communist Speak Out

[12.](#) (U) Predictably, India's Communists rejected the administration's South Asia Initiative almost immediately after it was announced on March 25. And Stick to their Guns

[13.](#) (C) In a series of recent meetings with Poloff, Communist leaders and leftist journalists insisted that the US initiative was "unacceptable."

[14.](#) (C) Leaders of three LF parties insisted to Poloff that they would not relent on GOI purchase of US fighter aircraft. All-India Forward Bloc General Secretary G. Devarajan emphasized on April 4 that the LF has told PM Singh that GOI acceptance of the American Defense Minister Mukherjee in the Spotlight

[15.](#) (C) Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) General Secretary Abani Roy reiterated to Poloff that the LF was angered by the US initiative, and instead, the GOI should scale back defense purchases and channel more money into social spending. Mukherjee purportedly responded that since

[16.](#) (C) According to Roy, the LF leadership is worried that Mukherjee is not fully with them. Noting that "Mukherjee can't behave one way

[17.](#) (C) CPI Secretary D. Rajan also confirmed to Poloff on April 6 that the Communists "will not compromise" on the military aspects of the Congress's Detractors

[18.](#) (C) Poloff spoke with two Congress leaders with access to the party leadership and journalists who follow Congress party internal developments

[19.](#) (C) In an April 1 meeting, Congress MP Rashid Alvi pointed out that the Communists are pressuring Congress, that the party is divided, and Alvi advised that DefMin Mukherjee will play a key role in the GOI's decision and has not yet come out in favor of the US fighter offer. He

[20.](#) (C) On March 31, Congress insider NK Sharma insisted to Poloff that despite strong support for the US Initiative from New Delhi's strategic community, Sharma maintained that the announcement of F-16 sales to Pakistan compounded the considerable "anger" within Congress regarding US handling

[21.](#) (C) "Hindu" political editor Harish Khare noted to Poloff that there was "no enthusiasm" for the US arms offer among his Congress contacts

[22.](#) (C) Former "India Today" editor Zafar Agha told Poloff on April 8 that his Congress contacts believe that India will become a world power

[23.](#) (C) As in the past, the Communists are determined to oppose the forging of closer US-India strategic ties, as they think they are in a better position
MULFORD "